

22 April 2013



# General Assembly

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### **CARACAS DECLARATION IN SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, STATE OF PALESTINE**

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People met in Caracas, Venezuela, on 17-18 April, and issued the following Declaration:

We, the members and observers of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, gathered in Caracas at the invitation of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, expressing our unwavering solidarity with the State of Palestine, the Palestinian people and their leadership, at a time when they face unprecedented challenges due to the escalation of illegal actions by Israel, the occupying Power, solemnly declare the following:

We reaffirm our unconditional support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, the right to national independence and sovereignty in the framework of the independent State of Palestine, and the right of the Palestine refugees to return to their homeland in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 194(III).

In this context, we welcome the admission of the State of Palestine as a non-member observer State by the United Nations General Assembly, and its admission as a Member State by the UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] General Conference. We express deep appreciation to all the States which demonstrated their solidarity by voting in favour of these measures, which constitute an important step towards the realization of the ultimate goal of a two-State solution with a contiguous and economically viable State of Palestine, existing side by side in peace with Israel, on the basis of pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in conformity with the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid Principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map.

We express optimism that the granting of non-member observer State status to Palestine by the General Assembly will help accelerate the momentum in the Security Council regarding its pending United Nations application. We consider the affirmative vote cast by an overwhelming majority of Member States on 29 November 2012 as a vote of confidence that Palestine meets the Charter criteria of statehood, and is ready and willing to assume its Charter responsibilities. We stand ready to act in solidarity with the State of Palestine in the General Assembly on the issue of admission.

Heightened worldwide solidarity manifests itself in the growing number of States recognizing the State of Palestine. In this regard, we appreciate the catalytic role played by the Latin America and Caribbean region, strongly illustrated by the initiative of the Venezuelan Government to convene in Caracas a special meeting of the Committee. We urge all States, particularly those which already extended recognition to the State of Palestine at the United Nations, but have yet to do so bilaterally, to establish full diplomatic relations.

We recognize that by virtue of its admission to the United Nations as a non-member observer State, Palestine has been vested with additional rights, as well as obligations as set forth in Article 2 of the United Nations Charter. We welcome in this regard the declaration of 23 September 2011 by President Mahmoud Abbas that the State of Palestine is a peace-loving nation and that it accepts the obligations contained in the Charter of the United Nations and solemnly undertakes to fulfil them.

We acknowledge that in accordance with the Charter, the State of Palestine may choose to become a party to the Statute of the International Court of Justice upon the recommendation of the Security Council. Pending such a recommendation, the State of Palestine may still avail itself of the international dispute-settlement mechanisms provided by the Court, in accordance with international law, by accepting its jurisdiction and undertaking to comply in good faith with its decisions.

We support any action by the State of Palestine to use expanded opportunities at the United Nations, such as the right to place items on the provisional agenda of the Security Council and the General Assembly, and to participate fully, effectively and constructively in all relevant international conferences convened under the auspices of the United Nations. The State of Palestine should seriously consider signing and ratifying multilateral treaties open to it, such as the Geneva and The Hague Conventions, the Convention against Torture, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. We also discussed options for the State of Palestine to make a constructive contribution to the work of United Nations specialized agencies.

We condemn the ongoing denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people due to the Israeli military occupation of the State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, and the illegal actions by the occupying Power that cause civilian casualties, socioeconomic and humanitarian deprivation and destruction to Palestinian institutions, properties, infrastructure, lands and water resources, and fragment its territory. These measures include, but are not limited to, construction of settlements and the separation wall, use of deadly force against Palestinian civilians, including unarmed protesters, political imprisonment and prisoner abuse, imposition of the Gaza blockade and hundreds of checkpoints throughout the West Bank, withholding of Palestinian revenues, and measures to change the character and isolate East Jerusalem. We demand that Israel, the occupying Power, immediately cease all its illegal actions and measures and make reparations for all damages. We recall that last year's Seminar in Cairo, convened by this Committee, estimated at over \$7 billion per year the damage caused by the occupation. We reiterate our call upon all States, including the donor community, to continue to stand by the Palestinian people by providing timely development, humanitarian and budgetary assistance to support Palestinian institutions.

We strongly condemn the construction and expansion of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which are a grave violation of international law and undermine the peace process and the two-State solution, and demand their immediate and complete cessation. We welcome the findings of the fact-finding mission on settlements, dispatched by the Human Rights Council, and urge all Member States to demonstrate active solidarity by implementing its recommendations. We call on the Security Council and the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to uphold their responsibilities. We support actions and initiatives that promote accountability for actions by third parties that contribute to grave Israeli breaches of international law.

We express our utmost concern at the stalemate in the political process and we call on the international community to re-engage with Israel and Palestine and remove the obstacles to resuming meaningful negotiation on all final status issues. A revitalized Quartet should coordinate with key regional players. It should report regularly to the Security Council on its efforts, and progress achieved.

We reiterate our solidarity with the Palestinian political prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails and detention centres. We strongly condemn prisoners' abuse by Israel and the illegal practice of administrative detention without trial, which provoked prolonged hunger strikes, and resulted in deaths. We call for the immediate release of all Palestinians imprisoned by Israel, including children, women, elected officials, pre-Oslo detainees and those held without trial. We urge a global solidarity campaign to address this important issue.

We reaffirm our solidarity with the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, under the strong leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas. We call on the Palestinian factions to implement reconciliation agreements in good faith, and for the international community to support Palestinian unity unequivocally.

We recall the historical ties between the liberation movements of Namibia and Palestine and the crucial importance of the support by the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America for Namibia's independence, and pledge to apply that experience in engaging all strata of the international community, in particular the youth, in support of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine.

We took note and supported a number of proposals from the floor for action in the United Nations and ask the Bureau of the Committee to consolidate them into a plan of action to be implemented by the Committee within its annual programme of work. We solemnly commit ourselves to intensify our efforts in solidarity with the Palestinian people and the State of Palestine at the Security Council, General Assembly, Human Rights Council and other organs of the United Nations, and all other relevant fora. We pledge to engage with the United Nations Secretary-General, the Quartet, League of Arab States, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Non-Aligned Movement, national Governments and parliamentarians towards a comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We will prioritize outreach to civil society, including youth and women, academic institutions, think tanks, mainstream media, expand social media efforts and partner with all other relevant constituencies. We commend worldwide solidarity initiatives with the Palestinian people, and we undertake to do our utmost to support them. We will continue to strengthen the programme of activities during the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, to maximize its impact.

We decide to ask the General Assembly to proclaim 2014 as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, to launch a global campaign to bring an end to the Israeli occupation, realize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive negotiated peace.

We express our gratitude to the Government of Venezuela and to its President Nicolás Maduro Moros personally, for the initiative to convene this important event.

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